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Letter dated 12 March 1997 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 12 March 1997, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Osman Ertuğ, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Hüseyin E. ÇELEM
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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ANNEX

Letter dated 12 March 1997 from Mr. Osman Ertuğ
addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from my Government, I have the honour to refer to the letter dated 25 February 1997 addressed to you by the Greek Cypriot representative at the United Nations (A/51/811-S/1997/168), which contains allegations regarding "Violations of the airspace of the Republic".

Since similar allegations were previously refuted in my successive communications, I do not intend to go into them in detail. Suffice it to say that the present Greek Cypriot charges, which are no more credible than those made before, reflect the inability of the Greek Cypriot side to cope with the reality that it is not the sole sovereign authority over the whole island or its airspace.

If the Greek Cypriot administration were indeed concerned about the safety of civil aviation over the island, it would not have interfered with the flight information region over the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus on repeated occasions before. Apart from creating confusion on this issue with its baseless propaganda, it is known that physical interference emanating from Southern Cyprus, in the form of transmission of jamming signals on the same frequency used by TRNC Airport Traffic Control, have also occurred, endangering the safety of civilian air traffic within that airspace. These dangerous violations of civil aviation safety were brought to the attention of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) and all concerned at the time.

Naturally, the greatest threat to civil aviation over Cyprus as well as the very peace and stability of the region at large ultimately comes from the recent purchase, by the Greek Cypriot administration, of the sophisticated S-300 missile system from the Russian Federation. This purchase is in clear defiance of the latest Security Council resolution on Cyprus, namely resolution 1092 (1996), expressing grave concern over the introduction of sophisticated weaponry into the island. It has also been widely condemned as a new destabilizing element in an ever-escalating build-up of arms by the Greek Cypriot side as part of its "joint defence doctrine" with Greece.

The above ominous development, coupled with the rejection by the Greek Cypriot side of the proposal of the United States of America for a moratorium on military flights over Cyprus, clearly shows which side is engaged in raising tension in the island, instead of choosing the path of constructive dialogue. In this light, the Greek Cypriot side's allegations on the rise of tension in Cyprus appear as a crude attempt to confuse the innocent with the guilty and add insult to injury. I am sure that the members of the international community will give these baseless charges the treatment they deserve, by ignoring them as an example of irresponsible propaganda.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 58, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Osman ERTUĞ
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus